Taste of Home

Poor Man’s Cookies

★★★½☆

In the 1930s, producers of a popular radio program called Jake and Lena invited listeners to write in for this recipe. My mother changed the name from Jake and Lena Cookies to Poor Man's Cookies because they contained no eggs, milk or nuts. Despite the name, the cookies are rich in taste!

TOTAL TIME: Prep: 20 min. Bake: 10 min./batch
YIELD: 3 dozen.

Ingredients

- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 2 cups rolled oats

Directions

1. In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugars until light and fluffy. Beat in water and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Fold in oats.

2. Drop dough by tablespoonfuls onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Allow to stand 2 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool.

Nutrition Facts

1 cookie: 112 calories, 6g fat (1g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 54mg sodium, 14g carbohydrate (9g sugars, 1g fiber), 1g protein.

Reviews

AVERAGE RATING: 3.875 ★★★½☆

★★★★☆ **Cheyenne**
Mar 11, 2020

Everyone whom I gave a cookies to loved it but they ended up really hard like a nature valley bar. Is there any solution to make it more like a cookie rather than a brick? I followed the recipe but altered the shortening to 1/2 since I read the comments yesterday after my first attempt failed.

★★☆☆☆ **Runner**
Sep 11, 2019

Wish I'd read the reviews before I made these. I love a flat chewy cookie but these were sooooo flat they became crispy and the edges looked burned (although it didn't taste burned) it just wasn't uniform in colour across the cookie and they were sooo greasy! I immediately wondered if I'd misread the recipe and put in too much shortening. I wouldn't mind trying this recipe again but next time I'll follow the suggestions from the comments and use 1/2 Cup of Shortening.

★★★★★ **sstetzel**
Apr 9, 2015

Either method will produce a great cookie. The change in the recipe was made by our Test Kitchen after several flat cookie complaints. They retested and produced a nice cookie with the recipe as written above. Use whichever one works best for you.

Sue Stetzel

Field Editor Manager

Taste of Home Magazine

★★☆☆☆ **Quiltpiecer**
Apr 8, 2015

I have the original Reminisce magazine recipe from 1992. It appears that STollefson is correct in that there is an error on the webpage. The original recipe calls for 1/2 cup shortening - NOT 1 cup, which would make the cookies spread to much and be thin. It also calls for 1/4 cup HOT water. I have not made these cookies yet, but will follow the magazine version when I do.

★★★★★ **MaField**
Jun 26, 2013

I also found this recipe previously and It calls for 1/2 cup MELTED shortening. Also the baking soda is dissolved in 1/4 hot water. Other than that it is basically the same. I rate that one 5 stars. I make it all the time. the trick is to NOT overbake. I like a soft, chewy cookie and this one is great for that.

Be sure the let them cool on the cookie sheet a while before removing them from the pan.

★★★☆☆ **STollefson**
Feb 11, 2013

Same photo as in the TasteofHome's Low-fat Country Cooking book...but shortening amount is different! Original recipe has 1/2 the fat...it calls for 1/2 cup of BUTTER, melted & cooled. Everything else is identical. I'd give that original recipe 5 stars...everyone always loves those cookies & asks for the recipe (plus they'd be 1/2 the fat!!!)

Perhaps an error was made on this website, or perhaps it was "lightened up" for the low-fat cookbook? The extra shortening may be the reason one of the bakers was having issues with the cookies spreading too much.

★★★★★ **annsway1**
Oct 12, 2011

To Princess 1982; you are suppose to use 'rolled oats' as stated. That may be your problem. I had no trouble with them and the taste was excellent.

★★★★★ **CookingHubby**
Dec 8, 2010

Taste good and easy to make with simple food staples!

☆☆☆☆☆ **princess1982**
Dec 31, 1969

I've made these cookies three times, and while I love the taste, they do not look at all like the picture! Mine flatten out & are thin as paper! What am I doing wrong? I've bought new baking soda, mixed them with a spoon instead of beaters, & tried not spraying the pans. Any help would be appreciated. I love the taste, but the appearance is also important to me. Thanks

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